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Title: Staffing inadequate at prisons

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Solano County's correctional facilities must enact measures to minimize overcrowding and must address staffing shortages, according to a recent report by the Solano Country grand jury.

California State Prison-Solano's facilities originally were designed to hold 2,610 inmates, but there were more than double that number at the time of the grand jury's visit. More than 1,600 of the 5,848 inmates at the state prison were housed in the gymnasium.

Other buildings have also been converted to accommodate the increased number of inmates.

"The amount of inmates we must accommodate is out of our hands," said Lt. Mary Neade, public information officer at the state prison. "It's really up to the Department of Corrections. They set the parameters for the number of inmates each prison receives."

Neade said the state prison has no plans for expanding its facilities at this time, adding that a proposed plan would still have to go through "an extensive review and approval process."

She added that the problem goes beyond finding enough room to house all the state's inmates.

"Unfortunately, there has to be some way society can reduce the number of inmates coming into our prisons," Neade said.

The California Medical Facility had no such housing problems, but the grand jury reported that there is a severe shortage of nursing and other medical personnel on hand because of recruiting and retention deficiencies.

The current population at the medical facility stands at 3,143, which is 360 fewer than the 3,503 inmates the facility is designed to hold.

According to the report, the clinic at the medical facility receives more than 100,000 visits annually, roughly three visits per inmate per month.

The grand jury is recommending the facility contract for medical services or develop programs to boost recruiting and retention rates.

The CDC's **Prison Industry Authority** programs received high praise in the report. The programs are designed to train inmates so that they have the skills necessary to seek work once they are released.

The programs employ 460 inmates in vocations such as furniture production, industrial laundry processing, sign-making and the production of safety and prescription eyewear.

Neade said the programs are part of California's commitment to rehabilitating inmates and reintegrating them into society. "It provides an opportunity to learn a

trade," she said. "They learn a craft and most of them are able to get jobs after parole."

The medical facility's Re-Entry Program also received high marks in the grand jury's report. Inmates within 120 days of obtaining parole are assigned to the program, which includes instruction on skills and resources critical to a successful parole.

Concepts such as social and communications skills, money management and employability skills are taught through videos, informative speakers and classroom participation.

The grand jury says the medical facility should consider a study to determine whether increasing time spent in the program would be more beneficial.

Officials at the medical facility declined to comment on the report at this time.

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